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Southwest Center

FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION, AND EDUCATION

Monthly Safety Blast

Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education

May 2019

Mental Health: Is it on Your Mind?

*You Maintain Your Equipment, Land and Livestock.
Why Not Maintain Your Mind?*

As a farmer, life is tough and your days are long. Farmers are some of the hardest working people on the planet. They help provide resources, protection, food and much more. They constantly check their equipment, vehicles and tools to make sure they are running smoothly.



Farming isn't always a one man job either, it requires many hands to get things completed. Day in and day out people are working together to accomplish the goal.

Farmers certainly know the importance of care, maintenance and teamwork.

Yet, farming, fishing and forestry as an industry has one of the highest suicide rates – more than twice the rate for the general population.

It seems that someone with such a high

intuition for things that need special care, would **know that when they aren't feeling right, they should seek help.** However, this just isn't the case.

A common quality among farmers is perseverance. They push through hard times, harsh climates and challenging environmental conditions. **Although they may persevere, they hold back when**



it comes to talking about stress and mental health.



May is Mental Health Month and we are sharing some helpful resources with farmers to ***Break the Stigma.***

Helpful Tips:

- **Sharing your story or hearing someone else's story.** This is a simple way to combat the mental health stigma. This article shares two powerful stories of farmers in Iowa and Kansas who have been affected by depression or considered suicide. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/dec/06/why-are-americas-farmers-killing-themselves-in-record-numbers>
- **Pay attention to warning signs.** Often times people won't share how are they feeling mentally. Look for these behavioral and physical signs.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF **STRESS**

BEHAVIOR SIGNS

- ✓ Worrying about things you didn't worry about before
- ✓ Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy (hobbies)
- ✓ Poor concentration, confusion; forgetfulness
- ✓ Uncertainty or trouble making decisions
- ✓ Relationship problems
- ✓ Sad mood
- ✓ Feeling anxious
- ✓ Change in personality, irritability
- ✓ Negative thinking
- ✓ Wanting to withdraw from people and activities
- ✓ Increased smoking/drinking

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
See the back of this card for help and suggestions - for you or someone you know!

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- ✓ Poor or disturbed sleep
- ✓ Weight loss or gain
- ✓ Changes in appetite
- ✓ Stomach or gastrointestinal problems
- ✓ Clenching or grinding teeth
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Poor hygiene


National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255
It's free, confidential and open 24/7



ADDITIONAL REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT:
umash.umn.edu/stress

You owe it to your family and yourself. It only takes a few minutes to learn about the signs and symptoms of stress. Managing mental health can save your life or the life of someone you love!

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF **STRESS**



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Do you recognize the signs and symptoms in yourself or someone you know?

YOURSELF

- ✓ Reach out to a loved one. Talk about how you are feeling.
- ✓ Talk to your friends, clergy, or medical provider.
- ✓ Reach out to a mental health counselor.

SOMEONE YOU KNOW

- ✓ Listen attentively and without judgement. Try to understand where they are coming from.
- ✓ Share your concerns about his/her behavior, mood, appearance, etc. Ask questions about changes you observe.
- ✓ Encourage them to reach out/tell a family member.

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[Take this 2 minute quiz to test your knowledge on the signs of stress.](#)

Resources: <https://www.sallyspencerthomas.com/dr-sally-speaks-blog/2017/10/3/stoicism-stress-and-suicide-among-farmers>

*Monthly Blast written by
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Sharing is caring!



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Produced by the Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education. For more information, contact us at 903-877-5998 or by email to agcenter@uthct.edu.
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